

CHAPTER 360: ACCIDENT/INCIDENT INVESTIGATION AND REPORTING

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361 RESPONSIBILITIES

The Incident Commander is responsible to the Area Manager or their designated Line Officer for the overall safety program on the incident and exercises this responsibility through the Incident organization.

First Line Supervisors (immediate supervisors) directly implement the safety program and are directly accountable for the safety of all who work for them. First line supervisors are responsible for initiating all accident investigation and reporting procedures.

The Incident Safety Officer provides staff assistance and guidance to the Incident Commander to aid meeting safety responsibilities. The Safety Officer is not responsible for personnel activities such as compensation-for-injury cases, which are the responsibility of the Incident Management Team Finance Section Chief.

Employee/Incident personnel are responsible for performing safely, reporting observable hazards, and reporting accidents to their supervisor.

362 DEFINITIONS

Accident An accident is defined as an unexpected event which can result in personal injury or damage to property, equipment, or material.

Employee (Ref. 39-71-118 MCA) An employee is any person employed (paid) or otherwise suffered, permitted, or required to work by an agency. Note that the agency directly paying the employee retains responsibility for that employee. This means that DNRC employees remain DNRC responsibility even when working on federal fires; federal employees remain federal responsibility even when working on DNRC fires, etc.

Contractors' personnel (ref. also 39-71-120 MCA) are not employees (unless hired by an agency as agency employees), but accidents involving DNRC contractors should be investigated and reported the same as for DNRC employees.

Incident An incident is an action or event that under the circumstances is likely to lead to grave consequences, especially financial.

363 INITIAL NOTIFICATION OF ACCIDENT/INCIDENT

Personal Injuries or Occupational Illness	Procedures for personal injuries or occupational illnesses are described in Section 315 – Compensation for Injury, in this manual.
Motor Vehicle and Other Accidents	Driver or an employee acting on his behalf must immediately notify the next higher work supervisor, and also ensure the appropriate Land Office or Bureau Chief is promptly notified.

See the DNRC Fire Suppression - 900 Manual Section 950 for policy and procedures in case of a fatal accident to any DNRC employee.

364 ACCIDENT/INCIDENT INVESTIGATION

The purpose of accident investigation is to discover and define those environmental and human factors which have combined to produce an undesirable accident or incident. This includes, but is not limited to, deaths, personal injuries, occupational illnesses, and damage or destruction to real or personal property involving either State of Montana or private entities or both.

- A. It shall be the responsibility of the Area Manager having the incident responsibility to determine whether investigative teams need to be formed to review and report on accidents or incidents.
- B. It is the responsibility of each employee to report an accident or incident to his supervisor, who should determine the level of investigation needed to identify the factors involved. The basic procedure in accident/incident investigating is the same for all accidents/incidents. The intensity of the investigation needed to determine the accident sequence will vary, depending on the severity of the results, or in certain cases, on the potential severity of results.
- C. The objectives of an accident investigation are to:
 - 1. Identify factual data about the factors and circumstances relating to the incident.

2. Accurately and objectively record the findings.
3. Analyze the findings to identify the significant factors involved and their relationships.
4. State conclusions reached from analysis of the findings.
5. Recommend actions to prevent future occurrences.

D. Remember these points at all times:

1. All facts must be fully developed and clearly reported.
2. Make the investigation complete, factual, and unbiased.

Relatively few accidents/incidents require a formal investigation. Those few that do justify formal investigation are the more serious, complex, and expensive. There are no automatic or fixed criteria for requiring a formal investigation. This is a managerial decision of the Area Manager.

When the Incident Commander or the Area Manager (or their designated Line Officer) decide that a formal investigation is to be made, the incident Safety Officer or, in his absence, the Incident Management Team Finance Section Chief, should promptly begin gathering relevant data to aid the investigation. In some cases the Safety Officer or IMT Finance Section Chief may be designated as the investigating officer, and in other cases some other individual(s) may be designated. In any event, the Safety Officer or IMT Finance Section Chief is in a key position at the fire scene and can be of great assistance to the investigating officer who may arrive later.

365 ACCIDENT/INCIDENT REPORTING

Procedures are described in Section 363 of this manual.

For the proper forms and instructions on reporting an accident/incident, see the Risk Management and Tort Claims website:

<http://discoveringmontana.com/doa/rmtd/claims/agenciesreportclaims.asp>